



# View from the Blackdown Hills

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Issue 81 August 2011

## It's your newspaper

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in your Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

# Parish signs up

By LUCIE SIMIC

blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

DUNKESWELL Parish Council is the first in the Blackdown Hills to sign up for a voluntary scheme to increase the number of snow wardens across the area.

Around 30 parishes signed up when it was launched last winter, and Devon County Council is hoping to swell the

ranks before next winter arrives.

Devon County Council is pledging to provide up to five tonnes of salt free of charge to parishes that sign up to the scheme. Those who register are asked to identify an individual to act as a point of contact during winter and demonstrate that they have arrangements in place to store and manage salt.

Parishes will then be free to decide, in the best interests of their community, how they use it on public roads and footpaths in their area. Parishes that join the scheme will take responsibility for the grit bins and salt bags within their community, encouraging responsible use of grit and helping to minimise abuse of grit. Devon County Council is currently replenishing the county's 3,000 grit bins ahead of next winter.

Councillor Stuart Hughes, Devon County Council cabinet member for Highways and Transportation, said: "The snow warden scheme is an additional resource on top of the winter service the county council already provides. It's about giving parish councils local ownership, and supporting them in providing self-help in their local community during the winter. Parish councils know what their priorities are in terms of maintaining access to their community buildings and primary schools, and they would be able to determine their local need.

"It's impossible for Devon County Council to treat our entire network of roads and footpaths, but while we can keep the main routes as clear as possible there's a limit to what we can achieve at a very local level. The snow

wardens can provide local communities with that additional level of service."

Snow wardens are given safety training by Devon County Council, and while they carry out the snow clearance at their own risk, as long as the snow clearance is carried out responsibly and within the guidelines of the scheme, a third party claim would be covered by the county council's public liability insurance.

Dunkeswell Parish Council has already signed up to the scheme. Councillor John Barrow, chairman of Dunkeswell Parish Council, said: "The county council gritter goes through the main road, but it's impossible to go to every road in the village which is where self-help for villages and small communities makes sense.

"We had started to do something ourselves in the parish with salt spreaders, and when the snow warden scheme came along we thought it was a good idea.

"I think people are realising that we can't sit back and that we have to do some things ourselves.

"A lot of rural communities have always been like that and people were pleased last year that we made it possible for them to get about. We'll have to see if we get another winter like it, but we'll be prepared if we do."

Parish and town councils that are able to register their interest with Devon County Council's local highway neighbourhood teams by the end of August can expect to receive a salt delivery in September or October.

For parishes that may apply later, the county council will endeavour to provide salt before the winter.

The Hills  
are alive...  
What's on in the area

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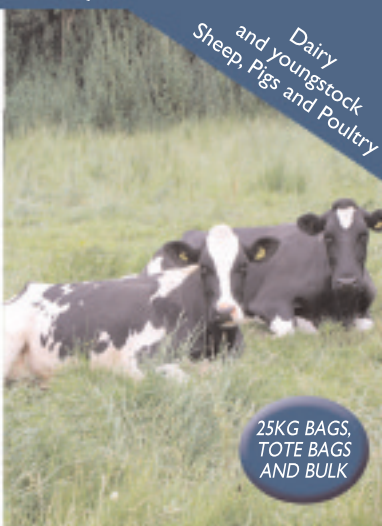
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www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk

### Blackdown Support Group

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# Elusive butterfly is seen in part of Blackdown Hills

THE presence of the elusive brown hairstreak butterfly was confirmed earlier this year in the southern part of the Blackdown Hills in a survey carried out by Butterfly Conservation Devon and funded by the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Now more people are needed to help with the next stage of the campaign to restore brown hairstreak butterfly numbers.

This increasingly rare butterfly, which has distinctive orange tails on its hind wings, flies in the late summer and early autumn. It spends much of its life in the tree-tops so it is rarely seen, but its eggs can be found lower down, on blackthorn bushes.

New volunteers will be trained to spot the eggs and gather data in the countryside. Butterfly Conservation will use this information to put together new advice on hedgerow management.

Anyone who is interested to volunteering on the brown hairstreak butterfly project should contact Roger Bristow on 01363 84815 or, alternatively, email devonbristows@btinternet.com.



◆ A BROWN hairstreak butterfly

## Neroche Scheme will host national event next month

By LUCIE SIMIC

blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

THE Neroche Scheme comes to the end of its current period of Lottery funding in September.

To mark that point, to look at the lessons from the last five years at Neroche, and to

look ahead to the future, the scheme is holding a major national conference on Thursday, September 29th and Friday 30th.

There is an exciting array of speakers lined-up, and the two days will provide a very interesting insight into the wider issues behind public forests, nature conservation, community involvement and outdoor learning.

In addition, on Saturday, October 1st and Sunday 2nd, there will be a programme of activities taking place in the forest, after the national conference has finished.

These will include bushcraft, wildlife tracking and wild food harvesting.

More details on these activities can be found at [www.nerochescheme.org](http://www.nerochescheme.org) in September and October.

## WORKING OUR WOODLANDS

Blackdown and East Devon  
Woodland Association with  
John Greenshields

WE are busy getting ready for the Blackdowns Woodland Fair, although it will be over when you read this article.

We are constructing a new road so the traffic will be one way, which is taking longer than I thought and using a lot of stone. Two large larch will be the centre piece in the main ring. These will, I hope, be used by "spikers" — people with spiked boots — to demonstrate the art of climbing.

The hay in the car park has only just been cut so we are hoping for good weather from now until after the show.

The beech trees are overloaded with mash this year. I never know whether that means a mild or a cold winter, but the hazel nuts are far and few between.

I don't know how many of you are familiar with term 'quartersawn', it means when the board is cut from the true quarter of the log, rather than rift or plainsawn.

A quartersawn board is special. Dimensionally stronger and more stable than a board sawn any other way, it won't cup as it dries out, and as the seasons change, it won't move very much in width.

We have a rack saw, it's over 100 years old and it is not easy to quartersaw on it, and because of the size of the blade it wastes a lot of the log.

But I have to say it's all worth it when you see an oak quartersawn board.

Woodland management, historically, is completely different today as technology has developed to fell and utilise larger-diameter timber.

A more scientific approach to management came in the 1660s after John Evelyn's account of plantation silviculture, Sylva.

The gentry became more interested in forestry and during the 17th century planted more and more trees to out do each other, and were known as hobby foresters.

Today land owners are reluctant to sacrifice good productive farming land to trees, and with wheat at over £200 per tonne I don't blame them.

However, it is false economy to plant new woodlands on poor or high ground as, in the past, woodland was planted on unproductive land.

My usual contacts are 01823660764 or email [parkfarm@tinyonline.co.uk](mailto:parkfarm@tinyonline.co.uk).

Email: [parkfarm@tinyonline.co.uk](mailto:parkfarm@tinyonline.co.uk)

Contact the news team at [blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk](mailto:blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk)

## Your PULMAN'S VIEW team



EDITORIAL MANAGER  
KATE WILLIAMS  
kate@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 631120



DEPUTY EDITOR  
LUCIE SIMIC  
lucie.simic@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 631120



CHIEF REPORTER  
ANDERS LARSSON  
anders@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 631120



REPORTER  
BEN MIDDLETON  
ben@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 631120



ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT  
LUCY STEAD  
lucy.stead@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32078



ACCOUNTS MANAGER  
STEVE DOWNTON  
s.downton@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32078



ADVERTISING MANAGER  
ALEX PHRYCE-JONES  
alex@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32667



DEPUTY AD MANAGER  
LOUISE NIDD  
louise@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32601



SALES EXECUTIVE  
ROSE SIWEK  
rose.siwek@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32637



SALES EXECUTIVE  
KELLY BAKER  
kelly@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32634



SALES EXECUTIVE  
JULIE HAMMOND  
julie@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32592



SALES EXECUTIVE  
AMY DOWN  
amy@tindlenews.co.uk  
01297 32603

## HOW TO CONTACT US

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ACCOUNTS . . . . .01297 32078

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# Family farm's successful changes help it diversify

**A FAMILY farm based at Churchstanton in the Blackdown Hills has undergone massive changes in its successful efforts to diversify into new areas since it sold its dairy herd in 2006.**

And further changes are afoot today as the Batchelor family of Higher Willand Farm, with the support of Business Link's Rural service, seeks to identify and implement a raft of new income streams for the years to come.

These include caring for a herd of longhorn cattle on 400 acres of the Neroche Forest in the Blackdown Hills that the family is renting from the Forestry Commission.

According to Becky Batchelor, she and her husband Russell, brother-in-law Richard and parents-in-law Martin and Rita saw more than five years ago that dairy farming was no longer their future.

"Selling the herd was a wrench for all of us, but it has freed us up to concentrate on developing other businesses at the farm that make a profit," she says today.

These include a building company, which carries out agricultural work such as stone-walling and installing drainage systems for other farmers as well as general building for local home-owners around the area. In addition, the family has converted its cattle sheds into a free-range poultry facility for 7,500 egg-laying hens and grows crops for sale into the equestrian market.

One of the most exciting new ventures on the horizon, though, is the longhorn

project, which is part of a bid to protect and encourage biodiversity through regrowing natural habitats. Under the Batchelors' contract with the Forestry Commission, they can keep all progeny provided that at the end of the term they return a herd of the same size that they received.

As Becky says: "This will enable us to build the herd, sell pedigree heifers and to launch a box scheme for longhorn beef, which is particularly delicious."

It was to talk through the challenges involved with this and other projects that Becky and Russell invited Graham Woolcock of Business Link's Rural service to carry out a full farm survey this April.

Becky said: "We first spoke to Graham at a fantastic event Business Link event, where we saw a presentation by the BBC's Adam Henson."

"Graham came out to see us a few days later, and I've got to say that we found his advice very interesting and useful. Naturally, like everybody else, we wanted initially to talk about grant availability but he surprised us with his great ideas across a lot of areas."

Focusing on the longhorn project, Graham offered his advice on market research and promotion, including an introduction to Business Link technology adviser Keith Hamshire, who provided input on running a blog and other ways of attracting customers. Graham also advised them on how to meet all the rules involved with running a meat retailing business.

As Becky says: "He additionally talked



◆ BECKY and Graham Batchelor with their livestock

us through a number of other plans we have in mind, providing great insight and advice on how to meet legislative requirements and successful marketing.

"All in all, it was a hugely helpful and eye-opening session that I'd advise any farmer to undergo."

Graham Woolcock said: "The Batchelors are a particularly imaginative and innovative family, and it's a pleasure to help them find the information they need to

put their great ideas into action.

"The future looks very exciting for them."

For further information on the services available to farmers and other land-based businesses through Business Link's Rural service, which is delivered across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon and Somerset by Peninsula Enterprise, call 0845 600 9966 or visit

www.businessanswers.info/rural.

## RSPCA and police probe horse death

**THE police and RSPCA are investigating the death of a horse in a field in Churchinford, near Taunton, last month.**

The horse, Lucky Touch, is believed to have been shot whilst standing in a field a mile away from the owner's home.

Inspector Ryder said: "It's absolutely horrific. The veterinary surgeon who examined her said it would have taken her a long time to die."

"She was last seen alive by her owner on Sunday afternoon."

"This must be worrying for other horse owners. We would urge anyone with any information to call the police or to contact the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999."

## Nominees sought for local first aid heroes

**ST John Ambulance is on the look out for local nominees as part of a nationwide search for individuals, businesses and communities leading the way in first aid**

The inaugural St John Ambulance First Aid Awards aims to recognise the achievements of those who champion first aid and heroes who have been the difference between a life lost and a life saved.

The event has just launched and already has the backing of high-profile supporters including presenter Matthew Wright whose life was saved through first aid, and BBC newsreader Sophie Raworth, who will host the awards.

Nominations are free and must be made by August 26th via [www.sja.org.uk/firstaidawards](http://www.sja.org.uk/firstaidawards), where more information can be found.

## Farm will host beer and music festival

**THE Blackdown Hills Beer and Music Festival will take place on Friday, August 12th and 13th at Cherry Hayes Farm, Smeatharpe.**

As well as the real ales, cider and wine there will be music from the likes of The Chase, The Skarlets, Slap Jack, Explicit Funk and many more.

For more information or to book tickets call 01823 601491 or visit [www.blackdownbeerfestival.com](http://www.blackdownbeerfestival.com).

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◆ DALWOOD Primary School has been given book vouchers to the value of £150 by the WH Smith store in Honiton. Pupils visited the High Street shop recently to receive the vouchers, and Laura French from WH Smith is pictured with year 6 pupils Gabriel, Oscar and Oliver handing over the vouchers

## Town's visitors can now pick up a free paper map

**VISITORS to Wellington can now navigate their way around the town using a new free fold-up paper guide.**

Wellington Chamber of Commerce, which says it also wanted to highlight the Blackdown Hills, was given £1,600 towards the production of the illustrated paper, which has been created by Milverton artist Lois Musson.

The guide is available in participating shops, local supermarkets, the Wellington Weekly News and the Tourist Information Centre.

The money has come from Making it Local, a consortium including the South West Regional Development Agency and Devon County Council, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development,

and Taunton Deane Borough Council's Economic Development grant fund, with help from Wellington Town Council.

Terry Sanford, president of Wellington Chamber of Trade and Commerce, said: "It's taken three years to get to the finished product. The project is aimed at promoting the town's small businesses by encouraging people to enjoy the

'Wellington Experience'. Traders want as many people as possible to enjoy visiting Wellington's niche shops."

The paper map is complemented by an interactive web-based version on the Wellington chamber's web site.

To view the map online go to [www.wellingtonchamber.co.uk/wellingtonmap.htm](http://www.wellingtonchamber.co.uk/wellingtonmap.htm).



# Cyclists assemble for Coast to Coast event

**By LUCIE SIMIC**  
lucie.simic@tindlenews.co.uk

**MORE than 200 cyclists assembled at Watchet on the Somerset coast to take part in the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance (DSAA) Coast to Coast (C2C) Cycle Challenge recently as part of National Bike Week.**

Not designed as a race, the event attracted a very wide range of abilities and aged 11 to 79, who set off on a 54-mile ride to West Bay in Dorset.

Some cyclists completed a shorter, 13-

mile route ending in Bishops Lydeard, near Taunton.

Mainly meandering through the quiet back roads of Dorset and Somerset, interspersed with some very demanding climbs and equally hairy descents the route definitely had something for everybody.

The first riders took just three hours to reach the Dorset finishing point, with one staying only 10 minutes before cycling back to Watchet, while the last to finish crossed the line after just over eight hours.

In total, approximately 12,000 miles were covered by the 209 riders in eight hours, equivalent to cycling half-way around the world, raising £15,000 in sponsorship by the day of the event with more to follow.

DSAA chief executive Bill Sivewright said: "The response to our challenge has been absolutely fantastic and I was told by many of the riders that we must do it again next year — so, I can confirm that we will.

"Most satisfying is that not only did the participants appreciate the route but they were also very complimentary about the organisation of the event and the quality and enthusiasm of the volunteers and marshals who made the whole thing work.

"The air ambulance receives no direct government funding, so we rely on public support in order to maintain our life-saving service.

"Successful and well supported events like the C2C help to raise the £1.4 million per year needed to keep flying."

Coast 2 Coast was supported by Porter Dodson, Pollard, The Bicycle Chain, Bond Air Services, and The George Hotel, West Bay.

More information about the DSAA can be found at [www.dsairambulance.org.uk](http://www.dsairambulance.org.uk).

## A new venue for east Devon group

**AN east Devon writers' group is moving to a new venue.**

Honiton and District Writers' Group, formerly known as Honiton Writers' Circle, is setting up base at Monkton Court Hotel, near Honiton on the A303.

The group is also encouraging new members to join.

John Carter, of Honiton and District Writers' Group, said: "Writers' group members are people who like writing stories, non-fiction and poetry.

"Some have had work published and others aspire to but most just like meeting to talk about writing, learn more about doing it and to read work that they and other people have written.

"We are a small friendly group so if you are just starting to write or have been writing for a while you will be equally welcome to join us — there is always something new to learn.

"The group also runs a very successful competition for young writers in east Devon."

Meetings take place on the first Thursday of every month between 7.30pm and 9.30pm. For more information contact 01404 812651.

## Queen guitarist writes foreword for local author

**BRIAN May, the Queen guitarist, has written a foreword for Blackdown Hills author and spiritualist Jenny Smedley in her new book, *Pets are Forever*, published recently.**

*Pets Are Forever* helps to bring the animals and the humans on this planet together in unity, and gives comfort to those grieving for a lost pet, by showing owners that they are never really lost at all.

In the book Jenny Smedley, who lives in Bishopswood, explores the many spiritual aspects of animals, with tips on how to achieve closer communication with your pet, and stories of pets that have returned after death or been imbued with divine grace.

Jenny Smedley DPLT, is a qualified past life regressionist, author, TV and radio presenter, international columnist and spiritual consultant, specialising in the subjects of past lives and angels.



◆ JENNY Smedley



◆ BUCKLAND St Mary Primary School was lucky enough to be offered a free visit to the Magdalen Project near Winsham recently. The children took part in mini beast hunting, river dipping and made recycled solar panel boats

# Queen awards local man with an MBE

**By BEN MIDDLETON**  
ben@tindlenews.co.uk

**A LUPPITT resident was honoured in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours List.**

Geoffrey Dicks has been recognised for his services to Macroeconomics with an MBE.

Macroeconomics is a branch of economics dealing with the performance, structure, behaviour and decision making of the entire economy.

Mr Dicks has been working with the coalition government for just over a year in the department for budget responsibility and it was this role that earned him recognition.

Speaking to Pulman's View Mr Dicks, who travels from Honiton to London each week to continue his work, said: "I received a letter in the post several weeks ago telling me that I was going to receive the MBE.

"I imagine everyone gets the same standard letter and it was very formal wording."

The economist says he is really looking forward to attending a ceremony at Buckingham Palace and receiving his MBE.

He said: "You get the invite and it tells you that the ceremony will take place sometime between now and the end of the year.

"Obviously I am really looking forward to attending the ceremony. You can turn these things down but the fact that I didn't shows that I am up for it."

**Visit the website and read the paper online at**  
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# A View from the Blackdowns



◆ A VIEW from Castle Neroche

*Do you have a photo of a View from the Blackdowns? Email it to [blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk](mailto:blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk)*

## Equine healer starts therapy workshops

By **LUCIE SIMIC**

[blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk](mailto:blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk)

AN equine therapy healer has teamed up with Ferne Animal Sanctuary, near Chard, to run workshops teaching animal healing and equine therapy.

Elaine Tyley runs Lafayette Equine Therapy and her workshops introduce healing techniques and show how it can help people with disabilities and emotional and physical problems.

Elaine turned to equine therapy after a bout of depression in 2000.

One horse in particular, Lafayette, taught her to have confidence in life again.

Elaine explains: "As a result of my own experience I embarked on a journey lasting 11 years.

"Studying and developing my equine

therapy I studied the horse, their ways of communication and fantastic spirit.

"With the help of the late Bill Harrison, a faith healer, I developed my healing and trained with The Healing International Network both with animals and humans.

"I developed a healing therapy with the horses that I have called Healing, Communication, Soul Searching Therapy (HCSST) which takes you on a journey involving nature and horses, who are now recognised for their capacity to make you question your soul and transport individuals both spiritually and emotionally to higher levels of awareness.

"The HCSST method enables people to lose the ego and reconnect with your soul and who you really are and to start living again."

For more information on the workshops and the work of Elaine call 01300 341213 or visit [www.equine-therapy.info](http://www.equine-therapy.info).

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## A View from the clubs

# Members enjoy visit to gardens at Cothay

**THE Yarty Gardening Club's visit was supported by a disappointing number of members, but those who went had the opportunity to see an interesting and colourful garden.**

The gardens at Cothay were laid out in the 1920s by Colonel Reginald Cooper.

Harold Nicholson, who designed the garden at Sissinghurst, Kent, was Reggie Cooper's oldest friend.

They were at school together and in the Diplomatic Corps.

The gardeners exchanged ideas, and it is interesting that Cothay was laid out in the 1920s and

Sissinghurst in 1932.

Cothay was recently described as The Sissinghurst of the westcountry. Alastair and Mary-Anne Robb found the gardens in need of total restoration when they arrived in 1993.

They renewed the Yew hedges, redesigned the garden rooms, and created new gardens including a bog garden.

They also dug a small lake, created a mound and a wild flower meadow and planted an arboretum.

Dodging the showers, the group enjoyed the wonderful colours and scents of roses, delphiniums, clematis and the misty blue of nepeta (Cat Mint).

The next meeting of the club will be on August 18th at Buckland St Mary Village Hall at 7.30pm when Terry Anderson will talk about garden design.

He will be updating members on the garden he has been designing which the group used as an exercise at his last talk.

Also, on August 21st Buckland St Mary Flower Show will take place in the village hall.

Schedules will be available from Ann Hales on 01823 480306, Barbara Board on 01460 234200 and Ann Kennard on 01460 234650.

There will also some available in Buckland St Mary Church porch.

## Supper and card games for WI ladies

**SMEATHARPE Women's Institute (WI) met to share supper and card games at last month's meeting.**

The normal business part was kept to a minimum as a team of ladies prepared supper for all those present.

Jenny and Pam set the mood with a glass of buck's fizz for everyone as a thank you for all the help given at the various catering events during

the year.

A delicious supper of sausages and mash was enjoyed by all, with plenty for seconds. Janice, who celebrated her wedding anniversary and birthday in the coming week, treated members to cake with tea or coffee.

Afterwards, the rest of the evening was spent playing card games.

Sally, a self-confessed competitive card player, was the overall winner,

gaining the most points and Viv won the booby prize of a bar of chocolate.

The flower of the month was won by Geraldine Field. Thanks were expressed to all the cooks who served supper and the ladies who were on washing-up duty.

The next meeting of Smeatharpe WI will be held on Thursday, August 11th and will be an evening of Thai Chi.



◆ ISHMAEL performs live on stage at Kerswell and, inset, Ishmael with his guitar

# Nearly 200 attend fun barbecue with Ishmael

**NEARLY 200 people gathered at a farm in Kerswell, near Cullompton, recently for a Blackdown Hills Christians' family barbecue.**

Along with the water slide, face painting, bouncy castle and great food, the main attraction was the visit of internationally acclaimed singer and songwriter Ishmael who provided

some brilliant all-age entertainment.

Ishmael performed his praise party on stage in one of the barns and had his audience bopping to his many songs.

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◆ BOTANIST and broadcaster David Bellamy visited Ferne Animal Sanctuary, near Chard, to officially open the new restaurant, tearoom and new-look sanctuary on Tuesday, July 19th. David spent a long time walking around the sanctuary and was very impressed with all the changes and improvements.

## Charities take part in tandem skydive

**CHARITIES** have joined forces with Skydive UK, based at Dunkeswell, near Honiton, in an attempt to raise money and break a record.

Families for Children, Exeter Leukaemia Fund, Afghan Heroes, St Loye's Foundation and Chicks are hoping to find 100 people to take part in a tandem jump on Thursday, August 18th.

Louise Banks, of Skydive UK, said: "If we jump 100 participants at this event, we will beat the current south west record for the most number of tandems to drop in one day."

"We are confident we can set a new record but only with the support of the public. We have the fastest jump plane in the country so if anyone can do it, we can."

Anyone who raises £395 in sponsorship will gain the right to use £200 of it pay for their jump.

For more information visit [www.skydiveukltd.com](http://www.skydiveukltd.com) or call 01404 890222.

## AONB's community plan now complete

**THE Blackdown Hills Community Plan** is now complete.

The plan will help all the parishes in the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty work more closely together on common issues such as broadband provision, local transport and severe weather.

Copies will be distributed to each parish in the area throughout August.

For more information visit the website at [www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk](http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk).

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## countrysideextra

Written by countryside  
correspondent  
**TONY JACKSON**



# Shooting badgers is a waste of time

**SEVERAL readers have recently asked me for my views on the proposed badger cull in the westcountry.**

Whilst I have a great deal of sympathy with the farming community who are losing stock on an unacceptable scale as a result of bovine TB, killing badgers by shooting at night will prove to be a complete waste of time and resources.

The Government's own best estimates show that a cull, even if successful, would reduce TB by a mere 16 per cent, whilst at the same time it is a racing certainty that the disease will be spread onto farms as yet unaffected as badger communities, disturbed by shooting, move out of their present setts.

In addition, the likelihood of so-called "expert marksmen" cleanly killing badgers lamped at night is remote. Inevitably, animals will be

wounded and escape underground.

As one who has used a rifle for sporting purposes for decades I know exactly what is involved and I am all too well aware that culling, or killing to use the real term, badgers will prove a shambolic disaster which will also invite retaliation from the more lunatic fringe of the animal rights movement.

Already there has been talk of a police presence required to ensure the safety of anyone attempting to carry out a cull.

It is, of course, a typical Government knee-jerk reaction in the hope that it will pacify the farming community.

However, I suspect that even some farmers are aware that this crude reaction to the problem is not the answer.

Currently a vaccine which can be injected into trapped badgers is under trial in Gloucestershire, but this can only be a short-term

measure until an oral vaccine, the way forward, is developed.

I am not, I might add, one of those who view the badger as a kind, cuddly old Mr Brock from the Wild Wood, which lives a blameless life. Badgers belong to the weasel family and are omnivorous.

They will break into chicken runs as I know to my cost and lost poultry, and kill hedgehogs and any other vulnerable creatures they come across.

Yes, they may look very charming, meandering round a sett eating bait set out by a cameraman, but they are still omnivorous, taking young rabbits, snakes, lizards, voles, wasp and bumble-bee grubs, pheasant and partridge eggs as well as roots, acorns and bluebell bulbs.

■ Ever fancied undertaking some outdoor conservation work but are not sure how to go about it?

Well a conservation taster day is being run by the Blackdown Hills

AONB team at Quantock Common near Stockland on Saturday, August 13th, starting at 10am.

Beginners will be given a chance to try out a variety of practical conservation tasks in a friendly, calorie-burning setting, but places are limited so booking is essential. Call the AONB office on 01823 680681.

■ A reminder from Kimmo Evans, East Devon AONB Community Development Officer, stirred me to investigate turbaries and swaling.

Now many readers are probably conversant with these terms but I have to confess my ignorance.

However, a film has just been made by local film maker Geoff Pearce entitled *The Management of Stockland Turbaries* and, although I have not yet had a chance to see it, I wanted to discover just what is a turbarry and why it needs managing.

I am sure that many of you will know that historically turbaries were

regions of bog or lowland heath where peat was cut for fuel and, as a result, these areas sustained rare wetland plants and associated wildlife.

However, once neglected as traditional practices declined and died away, invasive scrub and woodland blanketed the heaths, destroying or greatly reducing the former natural life.

Now these important heathland areas in east Devon's Blackdown Hills area, which still contain nationally important rare species, are being regenerated by traditional management techniques and, apart from clearance of scrub, one of the most important methods of regeneration is swaling.

Well regarded as a vital management method control and tool to enhance heathland, swaling is simply controlled burning.

Used for centuries, by burning in late winter and early spring, the previous year's dead grass and over-long, stalky heather is turned to wood ash, itself a valuable fertiliser and fresh new growth stimulated.

The actual burning is carefully planned to make sure that no wildlife or property is damaged and, of course, only takes place under suitable weather conditions.

In the north of England and Scotland regular heather burning on grouse moors in patchwork strips ensures that fresh young heather is always available to sustain a grouse population.

The word swaling, incidentally, is centuries old and can be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon word *swaelen* meaning to burn.

Incidentally, I understand that copies of the film, *The Management of Stockland Turbaries*, are available to purchase at £10, the proceeds going towards conservation of the turbaries. Contact Kimmo on [www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk](http://www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk) for further information.

How many readers I wonder will have been to the CLA Game Fair held at Blenheim Palace recently?

I have seen the game fair, the grand-daddy of them all, grown from modest beginnings to its role today as the world's largest event of its kind.

Perhaps its most important element is to play a vital part in the education of that part of the populace which still fails to understand the countryside, its management and its integrated role with country sports.

For instance, the part played by game bird shooting can be controversial but, nevertheless, it is widely accepted that the sport plays an important part in the management of woodland for a wide variety of wildlife, quite apart from pheasants and partridges, and that without game shooting, wild life would be very much the poorer.

To contact Tony Jackson, write to: Country Scene, South Street, Axminster, Devon EX13 5AD or by email to: [wardjackson@fiscali.co.uk](mailto:wardjackson@fiscali.co.uk)

*The views expressed are those of the columnist and not necessarily of the newspaper.*

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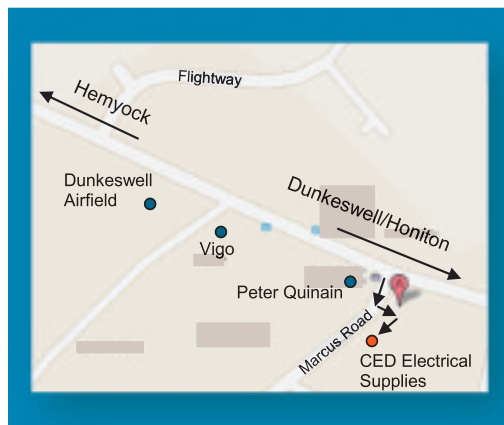
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# Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding

## From our chairman

2010 – 2011 was a tough year for all publicly funded bodies, and I am very proud of the way the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership and the staff team responded to the challenge. By being prepared to adapt, we managed not only to continue our existing work, but achieve great results in new areas such as green energy. We secured core funding for the next four years from Defra, albeit with a marginally reduced budget. The support of our two county councils and four district councils was also vital and was much appreciated again this year.

Our priority now is to reach for new sources of income and to find fresh ways of working, in tandem with local communities. I know that local people care deeply about the landscape and wildlife, and their involvement will be crucial to the future conservation of the Blackdown Hills.



Paul Diviani  
Chairman,  
Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership

Making  
it  
local

### Making it Local

Making it Local is a £2.4m fund for communities and enterprise in this area. During 2010 – 2011, 67 projects were proposed in the AONB. 14 were approved and received grants totalling some £122,000. These included volunteering, training, healthy cooking and living, local history, sport, play and promoting local businesses. For more information about the projects funded, see [www.makingitlocal.org](http://www.makingitlocal.org)



### Neroche Scheme

This landscape partnership project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, has concentrated on the northern ridge of the Blackdown Hills. Among the scheme's achievements in 2010 – 2011 were a 300-page book about the area, expansion of the fortnightly volunteering group, new geology interpretation, a series of events and training, and continuation of the forest cattle grazing project. See [www.nerochescheme.org](http://www.nerochescheme.org)



*The Blackdown Hills is one of the UK's 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – landscapes protected for the nation because of their exceptional countryside, heritage and wildlife. Over 80 organisations work together to protect this special place.*

### Funding and finance

The work of the Blackdown Hills AONB team was funded by Natural England, Devon and Somerset county councils, East Devon, Mid Devon and South Somerset district councils and Taunton Deane Borough Council. In 2010 – 2011 we received £286,000 and spent some £80,000 on projects in the area. For full details, please see the full annual report online.

Photo credits: Dan Bryan, Peter Eeles and Chris Goodman

Full annual review online:

[www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/Annual-review-2010-11.html](http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/Annual-review-2010-11.html)



# Natural Beauty – a review of 2010–11



## Landscape

- We achieved greater understanding of the landscape through in-depth assessment of different 'landscape characters' as part of a Devon county-wide project
- A Blackdown Hills case study was part of the High Nature Value farmland scheme which aims to 'green' EU agriculture policy
- We funded expert organisations such as Butterfly Conservation and the Devon Wildlife Trust to undertake a range of projects to benefit bats, butterflies and hedgerows
- We supported local projects to collect historical photographs and oral recordings and make them easily available to everyone
- We addressed the problem of light pollution with new guidance on our website



## Sustainability

- We produced a detailed report on renewable energy which backed small-scale installations. It was launched at the Green Energy for a Living Landscape conference which attracted a large audience of residents and professionals
- 900 children learnt about food and farming at Taste the Harvest, supported by the AONB and Making it Local
- We supported green enterprises including forestry, fish farming and local crafts
- We drove forward the Blackdown Hills community plan to help parishes achieve common goals
- We achieved better access to recreation through development of cycling, horseriding and walking routes



## Communication

- Our popular Countryside Events programme promoted 94 enjoyable outdoor events
- The first Blackdowns Woodland Fair was a great success
- We funded an outdoor classroom at Hemyock Primary School, created by children, parents and staff
- Improvements to our website made it easier to plan days out with interactive maps





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## The Blackdown Beer and Music Festival is BACK!!

This fantastic charity event raises money to support music education in schools, preschools and clubs on the Blackdown Hills. We hope to keep 'The Hills alive with the sound of music'!

Friday 12th and Saturday 13th August 2011.

Cherry Hayes Farm, Smeatharpe  
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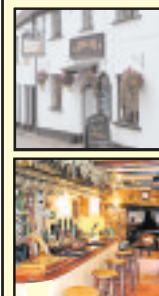
Huge selection of beers etc, great food and family entertainment on Saturday afternoon.

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Website -  
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## Welcome aboard the West Somerset Railway in our 35th Anniversary year

Our Railway, a true country branch line of the old Great Western Railway is full of fascination whether you are looking for a nostalgic ride back in time through lovely countryside or to study the railway and industrial heritage which our line preserves. The historic steam locomotives, coaches and wagons, and the buildings of our ten unique stations linked by a twenty mile scenic journey will repay hours of exploration. The surrounding countryside is as varied as it is beautiful. The gently rolling Quantock hills and distant Exmoor, unspoilt villages and farms nestling in leafy lanes, the cliffs and coast of the Bristol Channel with views of distant South-Wales, confident Church Towers, Dunster's imposing Castle and Minehead's seaside charm are all waiting to be discovered.

There are toilets on each train. Disabled persons accessible toilets are available at Bishops Lydeard, Crowcombe Heathfield, Stogumber Watchet and Minehead stations.

We can carry passengers in wheelchairs in our trains. Please let us know as space is limited and we can book you seats in advance on 01643 700384. Disabled toilets are available in our Lorna Doone carriage which can be booked in advance.

Dogs are welcome on our service trains and are charged £2.00 per dog.

There is a buffet car on most of our trains selling a variety of light refreshments a large number of which are locally produced. Please see the catering page for more information about our catering services.



# Leisure Review

Advertising sales: 01297 32601 [louise@tindlenews.co.uk](mailto:louise@tindlenews.co.uk)

Editorial: 01297 631120 [blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk](mailto:blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk)

## An outdoor taster event

### FREE Leisure Review Diary Dates listing form

Date .....  
Event .....  
Time .....  
Venue .....  
Town/Village .....  
Organised by ..... Tel no .....

**Send your Diary Dates to:**

View from the Blackdown Hills, Tindle House, South Street, Axminster, Devon EX13 5AD or email [blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk](mailto:blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk).

Please note: This is a free service and whilst we endeavour to include all entries, we cannot guarantee all listings submitted will be published. Please use one form per event.

**WE ARE UNABLE TO TAKE DIARY DATES LISTINGS OR QUERIES OVER THE PHONE**  
Deadline for Diary Dates entries is on Fridays at 12 noon

**IF you have ever fancied rolling up your sleeves for some outdoor volunteering but don't know where to start, an event in August will give you a chance to try it out.**

A conservation taster day is being run by the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) team at Quantock Common near Stockland on Saturday, August 13th at 10am.

The idea is to give complete beginners a one-off opportunity to try out a variety of practical tasks in a friendly setting.

Participants will be able to see the difference they can make for wildlife, burn some calories and enjoy good company.

The AONB's information officer Katherine Morgan says: "Lots of people like the idea of getting out in the fresh air and doing some satisfying work, but don't know how to get involved or worry that they will have to make a regular commitment."

"This event is all about welcoming everyone, whether you are just looking for an enjoyable day out, or you want to find out more about volunteering."

Places are limited and booking is required.

Call the AONB office on 01823 680681 or email [blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk](mailto:blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk).

**Send details of  
your Blackdown  
Hills events to  
[blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk](mailto:blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk)**

## Diary dates

### Every Thursday

**CHARD:** Zumba at The Guildhall, Chard. It offers a fun-based fitness workout. From 7.30pm until 8.30pm. For more information phone 07738 014409 or email [zumbasom@hotmail.com](mailto:zumbasom@hotmail.com).

**CHARD:** Chard Guildhall Antiques and Collectors Fair from 8 am. Free admission and a thriving fair with a good mix of regular and casual stallholders. Offering a fantastic range of good quality products. New stallholders always welcome. Contact 01460 239567 for more information.

### Every Tuesday

**CHARD:** Slimming World at The Guildhall, Chard. Morning sessions at 9.30am and 11.30am. Please phone Jenny on 01460 61786. Evening sessions at 5.30pm and 7.30pm. Please contact Charlie on 07790935647.

### Saturday, August 6th

**CHARD:** Classic vinyl record sale from 9am until 12.30pm at Chard Guildhall. For more information call Phil on 07990938198.

### Saturday, August 13th

**LUPPITT:** Flower Show with teas and raffle starting at 2pm will take place in the village hall.

### Saturday, August 27th

**STOCKLAND:** The Country Market will be held in the Victory Hall from 10am to 12noon. Top quality local produce on sale. For information and bookings phone 01404 881535.

## bhba Blackdown Hills Business Association Member Spotlight

### Blackdown Hills Market IN TAUNTON TOWN CENTRE NEXT MARKETS

Sat 27th Aug                      Sat 24th Sept  
Sat 29th Oct                      Sat 5th Nov  
Sunday 20th Nov (lights on Christmas Festival)  
Sat 3rd Dec                      Thurs 22nd Dec

*With thanks to Taunton Town Centre Co and Taunton Deane Borough Licensing for their continued support.*

**WE HAVE ONE OR TWO PITCHES AVAILABLE  
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For Local Products & Services visit [www.blackdown-hills.co.uk](http://www.blackdown-hills.co.uk)

If you can't attend the markets, why not visit the on-line directory at [www.blackdown-hills.co.uk](http://www.blackdown-hills.co.uk). You will find that many businesses will be taking part in other markets and fairs throughout the year. Alternatively many businesses offer excellent telephone or secure on-line ordering services.

To become a member of BHBA, Call 01823 681484 St Ivel House, Station Road, Hemyock, Cullompton, Devon EX15 3SJ [info@bhba.org.uk](mailto:info@bhba.org.uk)  
For details of business events and opportunities, visit our member website [www.bhba.org.uk](http://www.bhba.org.uk)

## Honiton Hill Rally

Rising Sun stock land, Near Honiton, Devon EX14 9NH  
Off A30 & A35 by kind permission of Mr Roger Parris

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> & Monday  
29<sup>th</sup> August 2011**

**9:00am – 6:00pm Daily Free Car Park**



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- Various Ring Events
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- Rural Crafts
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- Working Heavy horses
- Commercial vehicles
- Motor cycles
- Model Tent
- Trade stands
- Auto jumble
- Organs
- Junior Fair Ground
- Punch & Judy

An auction of collector's items will take place on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am. Application Forms available from stags, 66 High Street, Honiton. Tel 01404 45885

**Admission Adults - £7.00 OAP's - £6.00**

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**5th & 6th August 2011**



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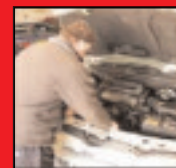
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# Motoring Scene

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## 'Green' Mercedes



**RECENT years have seen green issues focus the minds of car makers at all levels. From the smallest supermini to the largest saloon, consumption, emissions and sometimes even weight savings have become major selling points.**

There is, however, something amusing about a car maker attempting to squeeze a little more out of its high performance models. After all, no one really considers the green credentials of a 500 horsepower monster before signing on the dotted line.

Still, every little helps. And with car makers' group CO2 figures becoming increasingly important in the eyes of regulators, the activity is more than just for show.

Mercedes is the latest company to embrace the green movement at the faster end of its model line-up. Its AMG models have been highly praised in recent years, offering an impressive blend of executive-level refinement and hairy-chested performance.

Recently AMG's 6.2-litre V8 has been the cornerstone of the large car range and powered the popular E 63 AMG, but a new 5.5-litre bi-turbo motor has been introduced. The reduced capacity and decision to turbocharge has ensured that performance remains broadly the same but fuel consumption and emissions have been reduced. It's a smart move, and one that ensures everyone is happy: regulators and keen drivers alike.

The raw figures only tell half the story. In standard trim the revised E 63 AMG produces 517bhp or 549bhp in Performance Pack trim. Complimenting these are torque figures of 516lb/ft and 590lb/ft respectively. A bonus of the turbocharging is that the peak torque kicks in a lot earlier than before. Dragster-like sprinting behaviour is guaranteed thanks to those figures, and sure enough 62mph can be reached in 4.3 seconds and a tenth less respectively for the uprated variant.

Despite all this potential hooligan-like performance, fuel consumption has been reduced by around 4mpg from the outgoing naturally aspirated V8 car to an impressive 28.8mpg for the saloon. Granted, real world performance will likely see that dip lower but, nonetheless, it's a good starting point. CO2 is an equally reasonable 230g/km.

Theory lesson over, it's time for some practical experience. Turn it on and the E 63 greets you with a

familiar AMG bark, letting you know that it's no show pony. The now familiar seven-speed sports auto transmission can be left in D for most of the time, while the four modes (Comfort, Sport, Sport+ and Manual) offer increasing degrees of shift response, while the latter is accessed via a pair of chunky steering wheel-mounted paddles.

On the road the E 63 delivers a surprisingly comfortable ride for something with so much potential. The option to switch between two supplementary suspension settings gives you the flexibility to firm things up when conditions allow.

Another change from the old car is the switch from electro-hydraulic steering to an electro-mechanical setup.

The change appears to have been a good one, with the steering a little lighter at slow speeds - great for town and parking - but offering plenty of weight and feedback when you up the pace.

What's most obvious, however, is the distinct lack of turbo whistle or lag from the engine bay. Fans of the previous E 63 can rest easy; there's the same and more urgency when you mash the throttle with the new 5.5-litre engine, and there's no doubt over the car's relentless pace given the right conditions.

It's also encouraging to note that the Performance package option really does make a difference. Granted, the power and torque hike is modest but the extra poke transforms the E 63 into a genuine supercar challenger — not that the regular car feels wanting.

Play around with the various settings and you can get the car to behave or wag its tail like a drifting champion. With the latter progress is always predictable, which is doubly impressive for a car of this size. Playing it straight also reaps rewards; be it a race track or favourite backroad, the E 63 is surprisingly agile and feels much smaller than it really is.

The car's new steering is precise and, even in the firmest setting, the suspension does a good job of dealing with surface imperfections.

Mind you, all this technical talk soon goes out the window when you hear the car bellow, pop and cackle its way from A to B. Some rival cars offer a more clinical and precise experience, yet the E-Class on steroids managed to raise a bigger smile from the driver.

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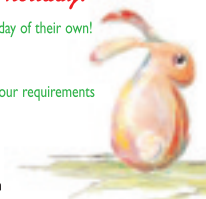
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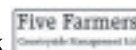
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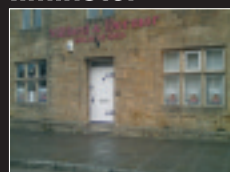
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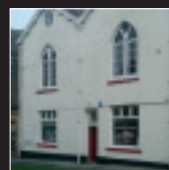
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Iminster Somerset TA19 0AJ

### Chard



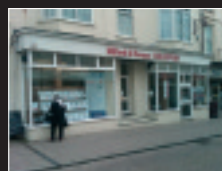
45 Fore Street Chard  
Somerset TA20 1PT

### Axminster



Silver Street Axminster  
Devon EX13 5AJ

### Seaton



Seaton House Marine Place  
Seaton Devon EX12 2QJ

**NEW**



### Culmstock £750 pcm

Detached 2 bedroom bungalow with good sized garden situated in the village of Culmstock. The property has been completely renovated.

**NEW**



### Hemyock £695 pcm

Semi-Detached 3 bedroom family house with enclosed rear garden and single garage, situated in a popular location within the village of Hemyock.

**NEW**



### Hemyock £189,950

A 3 bedroom detached house situated on a popular development. The property benefits from oil fired central heating. It has an enclosed rear garden with front overlooking open green area.

**NEW**



### Hemyock £105,000

A 2 bedroom first floor flat, with single garage, conveniently situated in the centre of the village. It is offered to the market with no onward chain.

**Tel: 01823 681300 Web: [www.worthpropertyservices.co.uk](http://www.worthpropertyservices.co.uk)**



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## Residential Lettings



### NR CULLOMPTON

A substantial 5 bedroom detached period country house. Hallway, dining room, sitting room, drawing room, family room, kitchen/breakfast room, utility, dairy, 5 double bedrooms (3 en-suites), bathroom, study. Honiton office 01404 42553

£2,250 Per calendar month

Ref: 33448



### MEMBURY

Spacious detached 4 bedroomed U/F farmhouse to let with outbuildings, parking and gardens. Kitchen/breakfast room, sitting room, dining room, 4 double bedrooms (one en-suite shower room), family bathroom, E.N.S.H., double glazed. Honiton Office 01404 42553

£995 Per calendar month

Ref: 34104



### MILVERTON

A recently refurbished Grade II listed 5 bedroom village house. Offering well proportioned character accommodation together with walled gardens and double garage. 2 cloakrooms, 4 reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, bathroom, store room & cellar. Taunton office 01823 447355

£1,250 Per calendar month

Ref: 46950



### HEMYOCK

Superbly appointed U/F 4 bedroom detached house. Sitting room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, study, cloakroom, family bathroom, GFCH, gardens, parking, garage. Pets/children considered. Taunton Office 01823 447355

£950 Per calendar month

Ref: 32403



### NR CULLOMPTON

A spacious 5 bed farmhouse with good sized gardens and grounds. Hallway, kitchen, dining room, sitting room, study/office, family bathroom, extensive gardens, tennis court, outdoor swimming pool, outbuildings, stables/grazing. Tiverton Office 01884 232872

£1,600 Per calendar month

Ref: 33428



### LUPPITT

Character well appointed 2 bedroomed semi-detached cottage to let U/F in rural location. Hallway, sitting room, kitchen/breakfast room, study/store room, 2 large double bedrooms, bathroom, garden, parking, E.N.S.H. Recently redecorated and carpeted throughout. Honiton office 01404 42553

£595 Per calendar month

Ref: 34089



### LANGFORD BUDVILLE

A well appointed and spacious 4 bedroom U/F semi detached house in popular village location. Kitchen/breakfast room, sitting room, master bedroom with e-s, 3 further bedrooms, bathroom, G.F.C.H, garden, parking, pets considered, available immediately. Taunton Office 01823 447355

£795 Per calendar month

Ref: 32405

**The West Country is Stags Country**

**stags.co.uk** is the most visited website solely dealing with the sale and letting of West Country property.\*

**Our website received over 101,000 visits in June 2011.**

If you would like your property to receive such unrivalled market exposure please contact your local Stags office.

\* Hitwise June 2011



### WELLINGTON

A delightful 2 bedroom lodge enjoying stunning countryside views. Sitting room with open fire, dining room, kitchen, utility, 2 double bedrooms and bathroom. Garden, parking area, garage and storage shed. O.F.C.H. Taunton office 01823 447355

£625 Per calendar month

Ref: 47507



### HEMYOCK

A well appointed 2 bedroomed U/F apartment on the edge of Hemyock. Large sitting/dining room, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom. Allocated parking. Electric underfloor heating. Double glazed. Carpets throughout. Taunton office 01823 447355

£525 Per calendar month

Ref: 47552



### BRADFORD ON TONE

An impressive 4 bedroom detached house with gardens and paddock. Entrance hall, sitting room with mezzanine, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, conservatory, utility, cloakroom, study, bathroom, garden, paddock, stables, garage, parking. G.F.C.H. Taunton office 01823 447355

£1,200 Per calendar month

Ref: 32527



### UPOTTERY

Spacious 5 bedroomed detached U/F house. Sitting room, dining room, family room, kitchen, utility, 4 double bedrooms 1 en-suite, family bathroom, OFCH, gardens, parking, storage barn/workshops. Honiton office 01404 42553

£1,095 Per calendar month

Ref: 46514



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## GREENDOWN, NR MEMBURY

**3.25 Acres**

A stunningly situated country residence enjoying outstanding views. Farmhouse kitchen/breakfast room, large sitting room, sun room, 5 bedrooms, study/bed 6, bathroom, shower room & 2 en suites. 3.25 acres, stables & triple garage. Ref: 45824

Guide price £900,000

Honiton 01404 45885



## MADFORD, NR HEMYOCK

**1 Acre**

A well presented farmhouse with attached stone barns in an idyllic rural location with stunning unspoilt views. 2 reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, 4 bedrooms, E/S and family bathroom. Utility, study and store rooms. Barns with potential, outbuildings, gardens and grounds of about 1 acre. Ref: 44580

Guide price £550,000

Honiton 01404 45885



## FORD STREET, NR WELLINGTON

**6 Acres**

A superbly located residential holding comprising a three bedroom cottage with spacious two bedroom detached bungalow and two storey barn offering enormous potential. All set within approximately 6 acres of land and located in a beautiful rural, yet accessible location on the slopes of the Blackdown Hills Ref: 42571

Guide price £725,000

Wellington 01823 662822



## CULM DAVY

A substantial barn conversion centred around a cobbled courtyard and enjoying fine country views over the surrounding countryside Ref: 43585

Guide price £595,000

Wellington 01823 662822



## CHURCHINFORD

A beautifully appointed five bedroom detached character house situated in the heart of this sought after village within the Blackdown Hills designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Ref: 40707

Guide price £395,000

Wellington 01823 662822



## NR DUNKESWELL

**2 Acres**

A detached south facing bungalow with paddock, views and subject to AOC. Spacious accommodation of sitting room, kitchen/breakfast room, utility, 3 bedrooms, en-suite and family bath. Single garage, level gardens and paddock. Ref: 46471

Guide price £295,000

Honiton 01404 45885

Cornwall | Devon | Somerset | Dorset | London